

IN THE APPLICATION

OF

JAMES CHYVAN MOORE

and

ANN MARIE D'AMICO

FOR

METHOD OF DEALING BLACKJACK GAME WITH DISCARD OPTION

METHOD OF DEALING BLACKJACK GAME WITH DISCARD OPTION

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is based on Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/507,730, filed October 1, 2003.

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to methods of dealing and playing blackjack card games.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

10 "Blackjack" (also called "twenty-one") has been and still remains the most popular casino table game ever played.

15 Players are required to play their hand against the dealer's hand. The game is often referred to as "twenty-one" because the object of the game is to acquire a total hand value as close to twenty-one as possible without exceeding twenty-one.

Every card having a rank from two to ten is given a value equal to the number of its rank. "Court" or "face" cards (Jacks, Queens and Kings) have a value of ten. An ace has a value of either one or eleven (depending on which number will allow the 5 player to get as close to twenty-one as possible without going over it).

The dealer starts by dealing each player (and himself) two cards from a standard deck of 52 playing cards (having four cards of each of the 13 ranks mentioned in the preceding paragraph, with 10 one card of each of four suits in each rank, the four suits being spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs). One of the two cards initially dealt to the dealer (called the "up card") is placed face up, and the other card is placed face down. Players may choose to draw additional cards in attempting to acquire a total as close to 15 21 as possible without "busting" (exceeding 21). A busted hand loses immediately. A hand with a total value of 21 is called a "Blackjack".

While players may stop drawing at any time, the dealer is required to draw until his total is 17 or more. If both the dealer 20 and a player bust, the dealer wins, as the player must draw first and will lose immediately when busting.

Hands that contain an ace are called "soft". Hands with no ace are called "hard". Hands are also referred to by their total

point value. E.g., a 6 and a 7 would be a "hard 13", while a 6, a 7 and an ace would be a "soft 14".

Once a player acquires a hard total of 12, she is in danger of busting if she draws additional cards. Hard 13, 14, 15 and 16 also fall in this category. Hereafter, such hands will be referred to as "bust draws".

As the dealer only shows one card of his two-card starting hand, every player faces a dilemma once she has a bust draw: Should she draw and risk busting or stand and hope that the dealer 10 busts?

FIG. 1 is a chart that shows three different classifications for the possible two-card starting hand in a single deck. In a player's original two cards there are 1,326 possible hands that she can receive in a standard 52-card deck. FIG. 1 shows the number of 15 possible ways there are of receiving each hand. Dividing the number of possible ways by 1,326 and multiplying by 100% gives the average percentage of time you should receive each hand.

FIG. 1 shows bust draw hands to be the most frequent, with an average of 514 hand received per 1326 possibilities or almost 39% of all starting hands received. It is always possible to bust any 20 of these hands with a single draw.

The second most frequent group of hands are the "made hands" with an average of 446 starting hands in the 1326 possibilities or

almost 34% of all possible starting hands. These hands include all totals of hard 17 or more and soft hands of 18 or more. With the possible exception of soft 18, all these made hands should stand "as is". Any draws to these hands will severely weaken the 5 player's chance to win the hand. Thus, their hand is "made".

The smallest group of starting hands are "free draw" hands, so-called because players can freely draw at least one and sometimes more additional cards without risk of busting. Free draw hands include hard totals of 11 or less and soft totals of 17 or 10 less. These hands average 366 starting hands of the 1326 possibilities in a single deck; less than 28% of all possible starting hands.

Because players simply stand on "made hands" and fear busting their "bust draws", most of the fun, action and excitement for 15 players lie in the "free draw" group of hands. The reason is simple. Players can act on these hands every time by freely drawing at least one card. Better yet, one draw has the possibility of turning 88% of these "free draw" hands into "made hands". This includes all two-card totals of hard 7, 8, 9, 10 and 20 11.

It also includes all soft hands of 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17. A small card can make the hand, as the ace can be given a value of eleven. A large hand cannot bust the hand, as the ace would then

be given a value of one. Drawing and making these hands and never risking busting them can be fun. But players find little joy in continually making tough decisions on their "bust draws".

These "free draws" offer some nice "double down" opportunities 5 with the hard totals of 11, 10 and 9. The chance to double your bet and take only one card exists only in free draw hands. Doubling down on made hands and bust draw hands would be pure foolishness.

Another fun feature of free draw hands lies in the chance to 10 turn small free draw hands of 8 or less into better free draw hands such as 10 or 11. Free draw hands are the only group of hands to provide action for the player on every hand.

In the past few years, many side bets have been created based 15 on the first two cards received by the players in blackjack games. While these bets may create a little more amusement for the players, they have no effect on the outcome of the player's hands. The bad starting hands are still bad starting hands. The ever-present "bust draws" are still prevalent. The stressful decisions never diminish, and the dealer's up card still appears ominous more 20 often than not.

While frequent "bust draws" in the first two cards can be very discouraging, there is one thing worse for the player: The dealer receives a Blackjack! While "bust draws" occur almost eight times

as often, the fear of that dealer's Blackjack is always present.

There have been numerous variations of the popular casino card game called "blackjack" or "twenty-one", but none that are equivalent to the present invention.

5 U.S. Patent No. 5,660,392, issued on August 26, 1997, to Brian S. Hansen, discloses a method for playing a blackjack-type card game, in which the player makes an additional wager, the cards are dealt one at a time, and the player has the option of making an additional wager after each card is dealt. The instant invention
10 is distinguishable, in that it allows a player to discard a card that has been dealt, if a fee is paid in advance.

15 U.S. Patent No. 5,743,532, issued on April 28, 1998, to William M. Lafferty, discloses a method of making a side bet during blackjack. The player has the option of betting that the dealer has an ace.

U.S. Patent No. 5,823,536, issued on October 20, 1998, to Leo Flasch, discloses a blackjack card game and method of playing a game, in which each player, in turn, is offered the role of banker until a first player accepts.

20 U.S. Patent No. 5,979,897, issued on November 9, 1999, to Howard Francis Grossman, discloses a method of playing blackjack, in which various side bets are allowed to increase the excitement of playing.

U.S. Patent No. 5,984,308, issued on November 16, 1999, to Delores Herrmann, discloses a variation of blackjack, allowing an optional bonus bet that the dealer will not exceed the player's point count total.

5 U.S. Patent No. 6,293,551, issued on September 25, 2001, to Derek J. Webb, discloses a blackjack card game incorporating two-card 21 wagers. A first card is dealt to a player and a first card is dealt to the dealer. If the player's first card is an ace or 10-value card, the player has the option of betting that his or her two-card total will be 21. If the dealer's first card is an ace or 10-value card, the player has the option of betting that the dealer's two-card total will be 21.

10 U.S. Patent No. 6,375,190, issued on April 23, 2002, to Robert William Kocher, discloses a game of blackjack allowing the player to take two extra cards ("double-hit") or three extra cards ("triple-hit"). The instant invention is distinguishable, in that 15 it allows the players to discard a card.

15 U.S. Patent No. 6,394,456, issued on May 28, 2002, to George M. Long, discloses a method of playing a variation of the card game "twenty-one", in which a player who is dealt a pair may "split" the 20 pair, and be dealt additional cards to form two hands, each of which contains one card from the pair that is split.

U.S. Patent No. 6,485,020, issued on November 26, 2002, to John Broadnax, discloses a casino card game involving optional variations of blackjack. The game allows a player to replace one of the first two cards dealt. The instant invention is 5 distinguishable, in that it allows one of the first two cards dealt to be replaced only if the player pays a fee in advance, and it does not allow either card to be replaced if at least one of them is an ace.

U.S. Patent No. 6,540,230, issued on April 1, 2003, to Jay S. 10 Walker et al., discloses a method and apparatus for playing a card game such as blackjack, including "bust insurance" and "mortgage" options. The options may be selected after the first two cards are dealt. There is no option for discarding a card, as in the instant invention.

U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0104851, 15 published on June 5, 2003, to Naftali Merari, discloses an apparatus and method of playing twenty-one, in which a player may discard the cards that are initially dealt, which are then replaced with new cards. Again, the instant invention is distinguishable, in that it allows one of the first two cards dealt to be replaced 20 only if the player pays a fee in advance, and it does not allow either card to be replaced if at least one of them is an ace.

U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0139211, published on July 24, 2003, to Moe Mostashari, discloses a "no bust" 21 or blackjack game, in which a player has an option of having the dealer replace a draw card that causes the player's hand to "bust" by exceeding 21 points. (A "draw card" is a card that is drawn by the player after the first two cards are dealt.) The instant invention is distinguishable, in that it allows one of the cards that are initially dealt to be replaced.

European Patent Application Publication No. 0 338 644, published on October 25, 1989, inventors James Patrick Suttle and Daniel Aloysius Jones, discloses an apparatus for progressive jackpot gaming, that may be used with games such as twenty-one or poker.

None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a new version of the game of blackjack, that offers more to the players than current side bets provide. For a pre-paid fee, every player is given a chance to transform all original "bust draw" hands into "free draw" hands.

This produces very startling results, by enabling players to double or triple their chances to win the hand. The fee allows all players to discard a card from all hard hands of 16 or less, if they choose. By discarding properly from their "bust draw" hands, 5 no hand can be busted with the first draw, yet almost 99% of the time it is possible to achieve a "made hand" with that first card. Currently, players have, unlucky streaks, receiving far more than their share of "bust draws" and busting them with the first card drawn. With the discard option, no hand can be busted with less 10 than two cards. Any player's losing streaks should be less frequent and much shorter under these conditions.

The discard option also offers players a limited chance to beat the dealer's Blackjack with certain two-card starting hands. These starting hands should occur over 57% of the time, giving the 15 player a chance to draw against the dealer's Blackjack. Any chance to beat the dealer's Blackjack should be enticing to players.

Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provide a new version of the game of blackjack, that will increase the players' fun and excitement.

20 It is another object of the invention to reduce blackjack players' sense of frustration, by giving them a second chance by allowing them to discard one card in a bust draw hand.

It is a further object of the invention to further reduce blackjack players' anxiety, by allowing them to draw against a dealer's Blackjack.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a means of increasing business for casinos, by increasing interest in the game of blackjack.

It is an object of the invention to provide improved elements and arrangements thereof in a method for the purposes described which is inexpensive, dependable and fully effective in accomplishing its intended purposes.

These and other objects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a chart providing information about different hands that may be dealt in the game of blackjack.

FIG. 2 is a diagrammatic top plan view of a table that may be used for the present invention.

Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention is a variation of the regular Blackjack game currently in play at most casinos. It gives players an option to place a preset fee which allows the player to discard one card 5 from their two-card starting hand of hard 16 or less. Soft hands are not eligible for the option (except as noted below).

The discard fee is preferably a flat twenty percent of a player's initial bet on the game. The fee is optional for all 10 players. FIG. 2 depicts a regular Blackjack table layout 10 with a special line 12 for placement of the players' discard fees. Also shown are typical indicia 14 that would appear on the playing table and seats 16 for the players. Optionally, when a dealer has a Blackjack, all discard fees are refunded to the players.

Each player would make her decision whether or not to discard 15 when it is her turn to act on her hand. If the player chooses to discard, the next card off the deck will be her replacement card. The new two-card hand will be her official starting hand. A hand containing an ace and a 10 would be considered a "Super Blackjack" 20 and be paid the same as a regular Blackjack (typically \$3 for every \$2 bet). (Alternatively, an ace-10 hand could be considered a regular 21 and not a Blackjack.) Any double down must be on the two-card hand. After a player receives her replacement card, she

would proceed to complete her hand according to all the blackjack rules of the casino.

The preferred embodiment of the invention permits players to draw for a "Super Blackjack" under certain conditions. When the 5 dealer has a Blackjack, a player may draw to any 10 or ace in their starting hand in an attempt to make a "Super Blackjack". A successful draw will pay \$3 for every \$2 bet, instead of losing the hand! (Players may be required to pay the discard fee to exercise this option, and to discard one of their two original cards. Note 10 that this is the only circumstance in which players having a "soft hand" (i.e., a hand with an ace) may exercise the discard option.)

When used properly, the optional discard greatly increases the player's chance to win the hand. Some discards are more effective than others, but most proper plays will increase the player's 15 overall chances to win more often than lose. The following are some general guidelines for discarding properly:

1. Always discard the smaller card from hard 16, 15, 14, 13 and 12. (Exception: With 7-5 discard the 7 against dealer's 8, 9, 10 or ace.)
- 20 2. Always discard the larger card from 7, 6, 5 and 4.
3. Rules for Pairs:
8-8: Always discard except against dealer's 7, 6, 5 and 4.

7-7: Always discard except against dealer's 6.

6-6: Always discard against all dealer's up cards.

3-3: Always discard except against dealer's 6 and 5.

2-2: Always discard except against dealer's 6, 5, 4.

5 The discard feature has the following effects:

1. All player's two-card bust draws can be converted into one-card free draws. It is then possible for 99% of these hands to become a made hand with one additional card, without fear of busting. Over six times out of ten these draws will be to single ten.

10 2. Converting bust draws to free draws will create 66% free draws at the start. Players will have the secure feeling of taking at least one card to these hands without fear of busting.

15 3. When the dealer has a Blackjack, the above-mentioned special discard rule provides the player a chance to draw to a "Super Blackjack" to beat the dealer's Blackjack. Player will average over a 57% chance to have such a draw.

20 4. It should always take at least two cards to bust any player's hand (except for made hands, of course).

20 Alternatively, the game may be played electronically, with the cards being represented on the display screen of an electronic device.

It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the sole embodiment described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.